

Tuesday, October 31st (Halloween) 2006

I told you a few weeks ago that I would tell you where we stood on the "Big 4" issues that are out there. I don't want you to be spooked (that would be a Halloween reference) into thinking that I wasn't going to keep that commitment. So, here is where we are on two out of the four. The other two will follow at the end of the week.

**Illegal Immigration:** Both Houses have passed and President Bush has now signed into law bills that do the following:

- Construct 700 miles of fence along the southern border and augment that with expanded surveillance equipment including aerial drones, cameras, ground sensors and lighting.
- A separate bill appropriated \$1.2 billion to build the fence and install the surveillance measures.
- \$2.77 billion to add 1500 more border patrol agents (an 11% increase) and \$1.3 billion for ICE custody operations adding more 6,700 detention beds.
- Create new criminal penalties for building tunnels under the border. Believe it or not, before this bill became law, it was not illegal to build a tunnel. It was only illegal to pass through it if you were not a citizen or legal alien.
- The policy of "catch and release" at the border has also been ended and replaced with "catch and return." The House also passed bills in September which have not yet been taken up by the Senate but hopefully will be before the end of the year. These expedite the removal of criminal aliens and members of alien gangs, increase the prosecution of alien smugglers and further clarify that local law enforcement officials have the right to enforce federal immigration laws.

With all of this stuff, I really believe that we will have operational control of our southern border. We will never stop 100% of attempted crossings. But when all of this is in place, we should stop almost all of these attempts which compares to only an estimated 25% we were catching just 10 years ago. This is real progress.

But that does not mean the immigration issue is solved. Roughly 50% of all illegal aliens in America today entered the country legally with a visa. They just overstayed that visa and we do not have the mechanisms yet to stop that consistently. So, internal enforcement of immigration laws are the next frontier which I hope we will address next year. And we must address visa

enforcement before we can allow more legal immigration via visas or else we will merely have moved the illegal immigration volume from the border to the visas.

**Budget and Taxes:** Regular readers of this missive know what has been happening here. A strong economy with restrained spending growth has cut the deficit in half in a year and will eliminate it by 2009 if both trends continue. The tax cuts have helped drive this economic growth and revenue growth. That's all great news. But almost all the tax cuts made in this century (OK, so that's only the last 6 years) are scheduled to expire between 2007 and 2011. That will happen absent legislative action to extend them or make them permanent. We must make them permanent or at least extend them to keep the economy growing and the deficit shrinking.....oh yeah.....and it's also just the right thing to do because it is YOUR MONEY!

The tax rate cuts that still may be acted on this calendar year are the permanent death tax reduction and the extension of a bevy of tax credits and deductions for individuals and businesses. You may recall that both comfortably passed the House but failed by 3 votes in the Senate. I can't predict for you at this time what will happen to these proposals because much has to do with the outcome of the upcoming election. But I hope we can pass them.

Until later this week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell